# Questioning difference

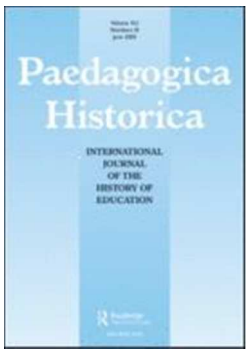
Grosvenor, Ian; Myers, Kevin

*DOI:*
10.1080/00309230.2017.1349157



*Document Version*
Peer reviewed version

*Citation for published version (Harvard):*
Grosvenor, I & Myers, K 2017, 'Questioning difference: bodies, (re-)presentation, and the development of "multicultural Britain" ', *Paedagogica Historica*, vol. 53, no. 6, pp. 730-750.
https://doi.org/10.1080/00309230.2017.1349157




# Questioning difference: bodies, (re-)presentation and the development of 'multicultural Britain'

| | |
|---|---|
| Journal: | *Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education* |
| Manuscript ID | PH-2017-0751 |
| Manuscript Type: | Article |
| Keywords: | black artists, the body, racism, informal learning, visual narrative |
| | |

# Questioning difference: bodies, (re-)presentation and the development of 'multicultural Britain'[1]

Ian Grosvenor and Kevin Myers

School of Education, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK

**ABSTRACT**

In *Different: Contemporary Photography and Black Identity* (2001) Stuart Hall writing on black arts in the UK in the 1970s and 1980s commented on the emergence of the 'black body' as a subject of visibility and identity which challenged the racialised body which for so long had been produced and reproduced by racial discourse. 'On the site of the body,' he wrote, 'racial discourses had long undertaken the work of systematically reducing history to biology, culture to nature', but it was also a ' surface ... of resistance from which alternative counter-narratives can be produced.'[2] Cultural identities, have histories and are subject to the continuous "play" of history, culture and power. This paper will (i) document the history of how artists, photographers and filmmakers in the 1970s and 1980s deconstructed and challenged the stereotyped black body of racialised discourse to produce counter visual narratives of the 'black body'; (ii) map the different mechanisms through which these counter visual narratives were presented, circulated, discussed, appropriated and used ; (iii) explore how history of these counter-visual narratives ' intertwined and overlapped' with the history of the broader 'politics of representation' and anti-racist politics in education in particular (iv) and finally determine how successful these counter visual narratives were in displacing the racialised black body in and of history.

**ARTICLE HISTORY**
Received 23 February 2017
Accepted 9 May 2017

**KEYWORDS**
Black artists; the body; racism; informal learning; visual narrative

## Introduction: 'See the art, hear the voices, and feel the passion that defined a generation.'[3]

> What is important to me is that there [is] ... a whole generation of black people who were born in Britain, who were educated in Britain and who grew up in Britain. They will be intimately related to the British people, but they cannot be fully part of the English environment because they are black. Everyone including their parents is aware that they are different. Now that is not a negative statement ... Those people who are in western civilisation, who have grown up in it, but yet are not completely a part (made to feel and themselves feeling that they are outside) have a unique insight into their society ... What such persons have to say, therefore, will give a new vision, a deeper stronger insight into both western civilisation and the black people in it.[4]

> Black art, at the very least, should indicate and/or document change. It should seek to effect such change by aiming to help create an alternative set of values necessary for better living, stronger communities, contemporary cultural identity, and so on, otherwise it fails miserably to be art befitting the black community

[1]This paper was presented as part the symposium 'Capturing the body. Visual representations and presentations in history of education revisited' at ISCHE 2016, Education and the Body, Chicago 17-20 August 2016. The authors would like to thank participants for their comments.

[2] Stuart Hall and Mark Sealy, *Different: Contemporary Photography and Black Identity* (London: Phaidon, 2001), 38.

[3]*No Colour Bar: Black British Art in Action, 1960-1990* poster .

[4] Quoted by Kobena Mercer *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies*. (New York: Routledge, 1994) 1

(Eddie Chambers, 1983)[5]

The year 2015, the month July, the place the Guildhall Art Gallery of the City of London Corporation and the event the opening of an exhibition, *No Colour Bar: Black British Art in Action, 1960-1990*. . *No Colour Bar* was the story of Guyanese-born Jessica and Eric Huntley and their involvement in the fight against racism in Britain and global liberation struggles. For the Huntley's political struggle was also cultural and the Bogle L'Ouverture bookshop they opened in West London in 1975 became a cultural hub, where writers, artist and activists would meet, exchange ideas and connect with the Black community: 'We were never just about publishing and selling books ... We were activists who saw culture as an expression of the political struggle, and this is a journey that continues'.[6] At the heart of the exhibition was a multi-sensory, interactive installation by the Black artist Michael McMillan which recreated the Huntley's radical bookshop. Juxtaposing book, flyers for book fairs and exhibitions, personal and business archives, community pamphlets and posters, record cover sleeves, audio-clips of performances, photographs, film and original works of art, visitors were encouraged to immerse themselves in the materiality of resistance spanning three decades.

Insert Fig 1

*No Colour Bar* is not the first exhibition to address the history of Black British Art, and it is too soon to assess its impact on contemporary understanding of that history, but its significance in shaping the content and arguments of the present study cannot be over emphasised. First, running parallel to the exhibition an events programme was constructed and delivered which directly brought the past into a critical dialogue with the present. This dialogue was enabled by bringing together in the same space the diverse and separate contents of the 'archive' and the 'gallery', connecting archival documentation of political activism and resistance with the artefacts of the Black British arts movement. Second, amongst the original works of art on display was Tam Joseph's acrylic and crayon canvas, 'UK School report' 1983. Sub-divided into three portraits, the work presents the passage of a black male through the British education system. In the first portrait, the boy is neat and tidy in his school uniform and is reported as being 'good at sports,' in the second, the uniform is gone, his hair is longer and the best that teachers can say about him is that he 'likes music,' and in the final portrait he is depicted as a disaffected youth with dreadlocks who 'needs surveillance.' Not ignoring its damning verdict on the experiences of Black males in the education system, nor the underlying racist stereotype which insists that black males are equipped with physical rather than mental attributes, the inclusion of the work in the context of the informal learning space that is the gallery materially acts as a connection to the formal space of learning, the 'school.' Given the disciplinary tendency amongst historians of education to too readily focus on the 'school' as the only site of educational knowledge production and consumption, the exhibition acted as timely reminder that the 'gallery' is also an educational arena, and one which requires greater exploration if we are to understood how knowledge is acquired.[7] Finally, exhibiting Black British art in the Guildhall (the administrative centre of the City of London, with its complex connections to imperial commerce and the protracted history of Empire) is

[5] Eddie Chambers, 'Black Artists for Uhuru,' *Moz-Art. The Arts Magazine of the West Midlands*, March-July, 1983, np..
[6] Eric Huntley http://www.camdenreview.com/node/989715 accessed June 2016
[7] David N. Livingstone, 'Keeping knowledge in site' *History of Education*, 39, no.6 (2010):779-85; I. D. Grosvenor, 'The Art of Seeing: Promoting Design in Education in 1930s England' *Paedagogica Historica* 41, no.4&5 (2005):507-534.

powerfully symbolic of a shadow which falls across the exhibition: the Empire come home and the struggle of the marginalised to become visible in 'History.'

'The body', as Stuart Hall has written, 'is at one and the same time the 'container' of identity and subjectivity' and on the site of the body 'racial discourse had long undertaken the work of systematically reducing history to biology, culture to nature', but it is also a ' surface ... of resistance from which alternative counter-narratives can be produced'.[8] It is the struggle to make the 'black body' a subject of visibility and thereby produce counter narratives which is at the heart of both *No Colour Bar* and this paper.[9] The first section briefly contextualises the emergence of a distinctive black British art over two decades in which questions of identity and belonging were explored and contested. A brief chronology is designed to give a sense of the scope and scale of these artistic practices. The second section of the paper presents five case studies that explore individual examples of this work and document its attempt to respond to the logics of racism, to consider black subjects as objects, and to question and bend the boundaries of national culture. A third and final section offers some summary arguments around the significance of black British art in the 1970s and 1980s and its wider importance for the historiography of post-war British history.

Black Visual Arts in Context

The 1970s and 80s was marked by the emergence into adulthood of a new generation of British subjects who either as children had arrived in the 1950s following the migration and settlement of their parents or had been born in the UK. Schooled and raised in 'the Mother country' this new generation were both Black and British. They were a generation whose lives were shaped by widespread unemployment, the rise of New Racism with its focus on nation, bloodline and 'belonging' and racist violence against the black community. The Black artists, photographers and filmmakers of this new generation did not constitute a homogenous group, their aesthetics, practice and politics varied, as did the influences which shaped their differentiated practices, but collectively they developed and exhibited a corpus of work which deconstructed and countered dominant visual narratives of the black body and in doing so addressed the complexities and possibilities of what it meant to be simultaneously both 'Black' and 'British'.[10] This work was produced in, to use Stuart Hall's phrase, 'the shadow of *race*'.[11] A list of exhibitions of black visual art in the 1980s is presented in an appendix, giving title, location and participation where known of Burke, Boyce, Piper and the Black Audio Film Collective.

The text below is taken from the 1981 press release from *Black art an' done* one of the first exhibitions to mark the emergence of a new generation of Black visual artists.

[8] Hall and Sealy, *Different*, 38.
[9] It should be noted that 'black' as used here is a politically, historically and culturally constructed category. It is not an essentialised cultural identity, but a signifier of difference as understood and imprecisely used in the 1970s and 1980s to describe minority migrant communities.
[10] P. Goodwin, 'New Diasporic Voices.' In L. Carey-Thomas (ed.) *Migrations. Journeys into British Art*. (London: Tate, 2012) 92-97.
[11] Stuart Hall 'Black Diaspora Artists in Britain: Three "Moments" in Post-war History,' *History Workshop* 61 (2006):16

> The exhibitors all share a common preoccupation with the culture and civil rights of Black People in this country and abroad ... the group believes that Black Art – which is what they call their art – must respond to the realities of the local, national and international Black communities. It must focus its attention on the elements which characterise ... the existence of Black people. In so doing, they believe that Black Art can make a vital contribution to a unifying Black culture which, in turn, develops the political thinking of Black people.[12]

The exhibition, organised by a group of young black artists and art students, was the first time that the term 'Black art' had been used in relation to contemporary art practice in Britain. It was followed a series of group exhibitions across England between 1982 and 1984 involving a differing line up of artists, but all organised under the title *The Pan-Afrikan Connection.* One of the earliest promoters of Black visual arts was the Black-Art Gallery, North London. Between its opening in 1983 by the Organisation for Black Arts Advancement and leisure Activities [OBAALA] and its eventual closure in the early 1990s due to a lack of funding, it exhibited the work of a range of artists of African background. Keith Piper and Sonia Boyce both had early solo exhibitions there.[13] 1983 also saw two exhibitions which presented the work of Black women artists –*Five Black Women Artists*, at the Africa Centre and *Black Woman Time Now* at Battersea Arts Centre, both in London, both organised by practitioners and both featuring the work of Sonia Boyce[14] and the first of four (the last was in 1987) open-submission exhibitions organised by Creation for Liberation, a group of Black cultural activists linked to the Race Today Collective, and all located in various venues in Brixton, London.[15] Black artists continued to curate and organise exhibitions throughout the 1980s, but in 1984 a large scale survey show *Into the Open: New Paintings and Sculptures by Contemporary Black Artists* was mounted at the Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield. This was a significant exhibition as it was both large in scale, involving 22 blacks artists, and at an important regional venue, but it also marked the beginning of a process that saw the work of black artists increasingly programmed in publically-funded galleries in stand-alone survey exhibitions, brought together on the basis of 'race' and 'difference' and thereby separated from wider artistic contexts and developments. At the close of *Into the Open* several pieces including Tam Joseph's 'UK School Report' was purchased by Mappin Art Gallery.[16] In 1986 *From Two Worlds* opened at the Whitechapel, a major London art gallery. Curated by Nicholas Serota and the artist Gavin Jantjes, the exhibition was presented as a departure from other previous 'shows' with their focus on difference and 'labels such as "Asian" ... or "Afro-Caribbean," which [were] ... used unthinkingly to describe art of very different moods and ambitions. ' Instead, all of the artists selected were of non-European backgrounds, but lived and worked in Britain and the exhibition was an expression of the creative impact of inhabiting two different worlds and the 'synthesis' this produced.[17] Like *Into the Open* it was a large scale exhibition which showcased 16 artists including Sonia Boyce, Keith Piper, Tam Joseph and work by the Black Audio Film Collective.[18] Piper was later to write that despite the claims of being a departure from previous exhibitions, *From Two Worlds* 'looked and operated ... within the class 'survey' mould. Namely, an

[12] Quoted in Eddie Chambers, *Black Artists in British Art*. (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014): 107-08.
[13] Eddie Chambers, *Things Done Change. The Cultural Politics of Recent Black Artists in Britain* (Amsterdam: Rodolfi, 2012): 4-9.
[14] Ibid., 257.
[15] Ibid., 257.
[16] Ibid.,23).
[17] Nichola Serota and Gavin Jantjes *From Two Worlds* (London: Whitechapel Gallery, 1986),5
[18] Ibid., *passim*

insensitive lumping together of a hotch-potch of art objects apparently linked ... by the 'non-European-ness' of their makers.'[19] The decade ended with another survey exhibition, *The Other Story. C*urated by the artist Rasheed Araeen at the Hayward Gallery, London in 1989 it featured the work of 24 artists, including Boyce and Piper, and toured venues in Manchester and Wolverhampton in 1990. Unlike previous large survey exhibitions *The Other Story* (and its related catalogue) presented black artistic practices within an historical framework. It told 'a unique story' of post war 1945 Britain. It was a story 'that had never been told ... because it only existed in fragments, each fragment asserting its own autonomous existence removed from the context of collective history.' It was not the only story, but as Araeen asserted quoting Edward Said 'it is crucial ... to recover our place history, "to tell of stories other than the official sequential or ideological ones produced by institutions of power."'[20]

The narrative here can only offer the briefest of glimpses of a history of black visual artistic practice produced in the 'shadow of race' in the late 1970s and 1980s. What follows next is an attempt to personalise this history by looking, albeit briefly, at four artists who 'entered the modern space that was forbidden to them' and challenged the dominant representation of the black body.[21]

Black Visual Artists: case Studies

*Vanley Burke*

Insert Fig 2

An eight year old boy stands with a bicycle in Handsworth Park Birmingham. It is 1970. He stands in the centre of a tree-lined avenue. The park is Victorian. He gazes confidently at the camera. His pose is relaxed. Attached by a wire to the handlebars of his bicycle is a Union Jack flag, fluttering in the wind. It is 1970 and the Union Jack had been appropriated by the far right in British politics as a symbol of white Britain. Yet, here he is, as one commentator recently noted: 'at ease ... at home'[22] and as Beauchamp-Byred observed, the flag transformed him 'into a symbol of the countless arrivals to Britain from its former colonies and protectorates.'[23]

The 'boy with the flag' is the most often reproduced image amongst the many hundreds of photographs in the Vanley Burke archive in Birmingham. Burke was among several other photographers in the late 1970s and 80s who were embedded in a specific 'knowable community', were a 'witness and advocate for it' and engaged in what David Mellor termed 'emancipatory community photography'[24]. Burke's first public exhibition was in a

[19] Keith Piper, 'Forward'. In Keith Piper and Marlene Smith, *The Image Employed: the Use of Narrative in Black Art.* (Manchester: Cornerhouse, 1987.
[20] Rasheed Araeen, *The Other Story. Afro-Asian artists in post-war Britain*. (London: Hayward Gallery, 1989), 9.
[21] Ibid,. 9.
[22] Marlene Smith, 'Looking Company' . In *At Home with Vanley Burke* (Birmingham: Ikon Gallery, 2015) 22.
[23] Mora J. Beauchamp-Byred, 'Everyday People: Vanley Burke and the Ghetto as Centre. In Richard J. Powell, David A. Bailey and Petrine Archer-Straw (eds.) *Back to Black. Art, Cinema and Racial Imaginary* (London: Whitechapel Gallery,2005) 175.
[24] David Alan Mellor , *No Such Thing as Society* (London: Hayward, 2007) 51; Ian Grosvenor, and Natasha Macnab, 'Photography as an agent of transformation: education, community and documentary photography in post war Britain', *Paedagogica Historica* 51, No.1&2 (2015), 120-22;

Birmingham theatre in 1975 when he had just completed his photography course at Birmingham Polytechnic and subsequent exhibitions were in schools, community centres, churches, barber shops and public houses as well as galleries. In 1983 he exhibited at Black Teachers Association conference in Birmingham.[25] The aim was always the same, to reach the community. As Burke noted in regard to the cataloguing of his archive in 2005:

> It's just about the ability to see something others may be unable to see, in terms of the value. Then show people. They need to see their contribution to this community. I mean, they have been contributing to this thing from the 50s and it's gone beyond, but there is no reference anywhere. It's about having themselves reflected, they are so desperate to see themselves. But this will be there, it isn't going anywhere[26].

He documented the everyday, so as to 'let the ordinary become extra-ordinary'[27]. He brought visibility to those 'dimensions of the black experience that had been previously neglected or sidelined'[28] and his subjects were, as Hall perfectly observed, 'absorbed in *their* lives, *their* activities, *their* troubles, sorrows, joys, celebrations, griefs, struggles and resistances, not his.'[29] It was Burke's skill as a social documentary photographer in the late 1970s and 80s to offer a 'fidelity to a reality ... beyond the constructed photographic space of the recoded image.'[30] His work was, and remains, about addressing absences and histories and countering the stereotypical visual stories produced by mainstream media. His work captures history at the moment it is being lived.

*Ingrid Pollard*

*Pastoral Interludes* was first shown as an exhibition in 1984 and consisted of five tinted photographs of black figures, both female and male, in rural landscapes.[31] Each photograph is accompanied by a short politically charged caption - the sense of unease associated with being Black in the countryside; of not belonging; of the souls of brothers and sisters lost during the Middle Passage; of the blood of slavery and the Industrial Revolution; and the threat of violence associated with being a trespasser. The photographs were artificially coloured by Pollard to evoke not only a sense of nostalgia associated with earlier hand-tinted postcards so as to draw the viewer in and then to confront them with her text,[32] but also to suggest a longer physical presence and immersion in history.[33] A history where the landscape is a signifier of national identity, and this landscape–the English Lake District– connecting not only to a particular literary history, but also a pastoral ideal which

[25]Philippa Goodhall, 'The Birmingham Context.' In Tessa. Sidey (ed.), *Sharp Voices: Still Lives*. Manchester: Cornerhouse, 1990) 57; Parminder Vir, , Johney Ohene, Eddie George, and Monika Baker *Reflections on the Black Experience* (London: GLC, 19860) np.
[26] Pete James, 'Home from Home: The Vanley Burke Archive.' In *At Home with Vanley Burke* (Birmingham: Ikon Gallery, 2015) 32.
[27]Burke quoted in Kieran Connell, 'Photographing Handsworth: Photography, Meaning and Identity in a British City,' *Patterns of Prejudice* 46, No 2, (2012) 145.
[28]Stuart Hall, 'Vanley Burke and the "Desire for Blackness."' In Mark. Sealy (ed).V*anley Burke: A Retrospective*. (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1993) 15.
[29] Ibid., 13.
[30] Ibid., 13.
[31] Permission was refused to reproduce one of the five photographs but they can be seen at: http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O107865/pastoral-interludeits-as-if-the-photograph-pollard-ingrid/ . See also http://www.ingridpollard.com/
[32] Phillip Kinsman, 'Landscape, race and national identity: the photography of Ingrid Pollard,' *Area*, 27, No.4 (1995), 303.
[33] Paul Gilroy, *Small Acts* (London: Serpents Tail, 1993) 115-19

represents the essence of Englishness: 'Coleridge, Wordsworth Dove Cottage and daffodils ... The dissonance is deafening.'[34] Going beyond ideas of 'Otherness, difference and marginality' Kinsman has also argued that *Pastoral Interludes* 'raises all kinds of issues, such as ownership of land, access according to ethnicity and gender, and identity at a variety of scales, problematising any settled understanding of the idealised rural landscape.'[35] This accords with Pollards' own observation that 'the stylised posed figures, the use of historical details about a particular place. It started off unconscious, but then ... it became quite deliberate. Nothing about the scene is "natural." It's as manufactured and deliberate as the assumptions and stereotypes about black people.'[36] Procter, however, makes the point that the images are not straightforwardly oppositional as 'she is depicted as both the passive object of the camera's lens and an active onlooker whose gaze exceeds the limits of the frame.'[37] *Pastoral Interludes* places the black body inside a visualisation of the English Landscape and asks the viewer to consider 'the limits and possibilities of belonging.'[38] It is as the same time both self-referential and a comment on the collective experience of black people in Britain and it allows, as Mercer has commented on her work in general, an 'open-ended reflection on the future generations of multicultural England: If our identities were borne on the journeys between here and there, then where will theirs come to be?'[39]

*Sonia Boyce*

Insert Fig 3

*She ain't holding them up, She's holding on (Some English Rose)* is a large scale pastel drawing and like other work by Sonia Boyce in the 1980s involved putting herself in the picture – making the black body an object of visibility, but also one with a cultural history associated with being a black woman of Caribbean heritage growing up in Britain. The image offers a rich and complex visual narrative which connects past and present, generations and geographies. In interviews Boyce has stated that, 'The historical is ever present in my work'[40] and that she was ' viewing my generation through the experience of my parents' generation – seeing the home environment as a Caribbean experience, almost a hermetically sealed space.' [41] The image is framed at the top by a deep-blue sky and a glimpse of a tropical landscape can be seen. Seated under this sky are a family – a mother and father and two young girls. All four of them are smartly dressed. As artist and protagonist Boyce has positioned herself in the centre of the image and stares directly at the viewer. Her pose mimics that of Atlas holding up the world and as Gilane Tawadros, Boyce's biographer, has observed the meaning of the image is ambiguous 'it is far from clear whether the artist is literally holding up this image of domestic unity or holding on to an idealised memory and invented past which she has re-staged in her imagination.'[42] It could equally point to the emotional family demands placed on an elder sibling in 1980s Britain. What is undoubtedly clear,

[34] Hall and Sealy, *Different* ,71.
[35] Kinsman, 'Landscape,' 303.
[36] Pollard quoted in F. Cattani, *'Swamping the country. Ingrid Pollard's Cartography of Englishness'* (2010), online at www. ingridpllard.com/essays.html, accessed June 2016.
[37] James Procter, *Dwelling Places. Postwar black British writing*(Manchester: MUP, 2003) 183.
[38] Hall and Sealy, *Different* ,71.
[39] Kobena Mercer, *Travel and See. Black Diaspora Art Practices Since the 1980s*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016)166.
[40] R. Fortnum, *Contemporary British Women Artists in their own words*. (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007) 115.
[41] Sonia Boyce 'Interview.' In Lizzie Carey-Thomas (ed.) *Migrations. Journeys into British Art*. (London: Tate, 2012) 114.
[42] Gilane Tawadros, *Sonia Boyce. Speaking in Tongues*. (London: Kala Press, 1997) 8.

both visually and in the title, is how she has taken a popular trope of British identity - the delicate English Rose – and given it a new meaning. The black rose on her dress bringing together Blackness and Englishness. In a recent interview Boyce said she wanted to 'flatten space within the picture plane, through the use of flat pastel colours and patterns, and at the same time flatten depictions of time so making connections between a colonial past and a migratory present.'[43] Her aim was to align content and form to suggest the migratory journey. In her 1980s art she saw herself 'standing as a representative figure for all black people, ' but by the 1990s her artist practice moved away from identity politics that involved her 'acting as some kind of informant for a whole group of people.'[44]

*Keith Piper*

Insert Fig 4

*Go West Young Man* is a series of fourteen panels combining black and white photographs with printed and handwritten texts. The panels are organised in a series of sequential historical moments. Images relating to the transatlantic slave trade, British abolition campaigns and the African Diaspora, photographs of black male bodybuilders and lynching's, stills from Hollywood films and family snapshots are juxtaposed alongside written texts to explore how the black male body has been historically read, commodified into gendered racial stereotypes and mythologised. As Piper explained, *Go West Young Man,* was conceived to trace the 'history of the commodification of the black male body, from its reduction to cargo in the hold of the slave ship, to migration, to the terror surrounding the Black male presence in contemporary society.'[45] *Go West Young Man* is about identity and history and by placing archives and memory alongside a father son dialogue–'Dada': 'I began to picture myself as they (hoped) to see me'– Piper connects the brutality of slavery and the middle passage to the contemporary experience of racism, and racist violence in the 1980s. Further, in mining the national visual archive to document the racialisation of black body in Britain's past and its continuing present, Piper presented his audiences with a work that challenged the myth of a homogeneous past that was part of the national narrative and imaginary.

The concept of *Go West Young Men* had its origins in artwork that Piper produced while still at school in Birmingham in the late1970s and went through several iterations. It was exhibited as a small framed image and text piece at the exhibition *Black Art an' Done at* Wolverhampton Art Gallery in 1981.[46] Eight of the panels were reproduced in print in the journal *Third Text* in December 1987 and were accompanied by a short essay by Piper on his experience of being a black artist in Britain and his commitment to 'researching and re-evaluating notions of creative practice which have been formerly marginalised and obscured, and fusing them with the prevailing currents of contemporary practice.'[47] The panels were transformed into fourteen laminated hand-tinted xerographs which was toured by the Ikon Gallery to community venues in the West Midlands 1987-88.

[43] Boyce 'Interview' 115.
[44] Ibid., 115.
[45] Piper quoted at http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/piper-go-west-young-man-t12575accessed June 2016.
[46] See http://keithpiper.info/gowestintro.html accessed June 2016.
[47] Keith Piper, 'Forward'. In Keith Piper and Marlene Smith, *The Image Employed: the Use of Narrative in Black Art.* (Manchester: Cornerhouse, 1987)

The work was later adapted into a film, also titled *Go West Young Man.* The layers of meaning associated with the use of history, archives, memory, remembering and Piper's own lived experiences continued to shape Piper's future work.[48]

*John Akomfrah and The Black Film Audio Collective*

Insert Fig 5

The Black Film Audio Collective [BFAC] was a coalition of young black British filmmakers. The work of the BFAC focused on 'the figuration of ethnicity' and looked 'critically at how racist ideas and images of black people' were 'structured and presented as self-evident truths in the cinema.'[49] In 1986 they screened *Handsworth Songs* at the Birmingham Film Festival. The film, made for the Channel 4 series *Britain: The Lie of the Land,* is a visual essay on the conditions under which the black community lived and the racist policing directed at them and was a response to the riots in Birmingham and London in the previous year and the structural violence of Thatcherism. For John Akomfrah, the film's director, *Handsworth Songs* was:

> an attempt to summarise a set of feelings, affects or ways of seeing this place [England] that had been bubbling for my generation since the 1970s, from the moment when you felt that somebody−whether society or individuals, be it police or whoever – though you ought to be targeted as the problem.[50]

Framing images of arrival in the Mother Country from the Caribbean alongside images of police repression the film provided 'a kind of topography', 'a timeline,' a 'kind of indexical machine' which explored the premise that the events of 1985 were part of 'a legitimate symbolic chain of events in which the riots were a logical outcome.' [51] Moving between original film material, archive footage, still photographs (from the Vanley Burke archive], media reportage, on site interviews, recorded testimonies and poetic voiceovers it presented the social invisibility and political powerlessness of the black community. Central to the films structure was the use of archive material. The archive for BFAC was a problematic place in the 'migrant imaginary' as it was the home of colonial subjectivity and the repository of constructed identities which could not be avoided because for society at large they represented the 'real' and were indelibly inscribed on the body.[52] Alternative subjectivities were invisible. *Handsworth Songs* gave names, histories, genealogies which went beyond state statistics and constructed identities and offered a temporality to the black presence by resurrecting the past and 'allowing memory to tell history, her/story differently' so as ' to forge a lyrical space in to which British post war sensibilities around race could be conceived anew.'[53] The centrality of resurrecting the past was signalled by the film's refrain, 'There are no stories in the riots, only the ghosts of other stories.' The film went on win seven

[48]Araeen, *Other Story*, 76-78. See also, Keith Piper, *Relocating the Remains*. (London: in IVA, 1997); Chambers, *Black Artists*.
[49] John Akomfrah, 'Black Independent Film-making: A Statement by the Black Audio Film Collective' *Artrage: Inter-Cultural Arts Magazine*, 3/4 Summer (1983) 29.
[50] John Akomfrah, 'Interview.' In Lizzie Carey-Thomas (ed.) *Migrations. Journeys into British Art*. (London: Tate, 2012) 106.
[51] Ibid., 106.
[52] Ibid., 106-108.
[53] Reece Aguiste, 'Handsworth Songs: Some Background Notes.' In Kodwo Eshun and Anjalika Sagar (eds.) *The Ghosts of Songs. The Film Art of the Black Audio Film Collective 1982-1998*. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007) 57.

international awards including the BFI John Grierson Award for Best Documentary, but it also attracted hostility, generally associated with the film's departure from the tradition of documentary realism.[54] For BFAC cinema was to be a 'social practice' which challenged the dominant representation of the white media and alongside filmmaking and visual installations in the 1980s they pursued a 'radical pedagogy' through 'workshops, film familiarisation courses, and screenings' with the intention 'to invent a black film culture' which meant 'creating an infrastructure – journals, seminars, courses, a debate around the cinema, in other words, an audience.'[55]

Arguments and Discussion

The five case studies presented here go some way to documenting a period of artistic innovation. It is, or it should be, part of a larger narrative of the development and reinvention of British art at the twentieth century. However, and at the risk of reinforcing a tendency to see black cultural production in instrumentalist terms, confining its value to sociological evidence, rather than acknowledging its aesthetic value, this concluding section reflects on its place in national and educational historiography.

The essential basic first task is to make some provisional assessment of the significance and impact of black British art in the making of multicultural Britain. There is after all no necessary connection between the two phenomena and historians have often imagined developments in the arts as completely separate from their social and political contexts. But this approach has never been convincing and it plainly will not do in this case.[56] Burke, Pollard, Boyce, Piper, and the Black Film Audio Collective were, of course, creative subjects who produced images that reflected their own distinctive practices. They were subjects with separate histories and with different futures in the decades that followed. Yet black art was also necessarily political. Black artists produced work that subverted modes and conventions, drew on their own lived experiences, unsettled received notions of a collective past, promoted counter-memories and addressed the racism endemic in society and by so doing they brought the black body into a field of vision and, more or less explicitly, opposed normative constructions of British identity. In particular and in an English society coming to terms with the end of Empire, decolonisation and immigration, black art challenged the 'registers of racial whiteness' produced in the nineteenth century as part of the long process of colonial ordering.[57] It therefore coexisted, overlapped with and was sometimes appropriated by political movements or causes that regarded themselves as revolutionary or progressive. Nowhere was this clearer than in the exhibition of work in material spaces that were closely aligned with the making of multicultural Britain.

[54] Salman Rushdie, 'Handsworth Songs'. In *Imaginary Homelands. Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*. (London: Granta Books, 1991)115-17.
[55] Kodwo Eshun, 'Drawing the Forms of Things Unknown.' In Kodwo Eshun and Anjalika Sagar (eds.) *The Ghosts of Songs. The Film Art of the Black Audio Film Collective 1982-1998*. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press,2007), 82.
[56] Stuart Hall, in one of his later essays, reflected on the difficulty of 'trying to make connections between works of art and wider social histories without collapsing the former or displacing the latter. Despite the sophistication of our scholarly and critical apparatus, we are still no very far advanced – especially when the language concerned is the visual – in finding ways of thinking about the relationship between the work and the world,' 'Black Diaspora Artists in Britain. Three 'Moments' in Post-war History', *History Workshop,* 61 (2006) 23.
[57] Bill Schwarz, *The White Man's World* (Oxford: OUP, 2011) 20-21.

In the 1970s and 1980s black artists exhibited their work across urban England in venues ranging from national and locally funded public museums and art galleries to art centres and concert halls, from private and community galleries to universities and schools, and from libraries to community meeting places. These spaces of display facilitated what Stephen Brooke and others have called a politics of recognition.[58] They afforded some safety and visibility to black citizens and, in doing so, promoted 'a right to the city.'[59] More than that, however, these spaces of display were educative. They were spaces of agency and action where audiences, presented with artistic practice that deconstructed social realities, could look, learn and reject long standing habits of representation that objectified and racially inscribed the black body. These spaces allowed for 'an exploration into the inner landscapes of black subjectivity'[60] they assisted the process of challenging and changing allotted roles and identities and so they also offered the possibility of new social relations. This is an extensive claim to make of exhibitions housed in local spaces, attracting little media attention and, possibly, reaching only a small select audience. However there are good reasons why black British art may be said to have provided, or at least helped to develop, the iconography of multicultural Britain.

One is that visual images were particularly effective as a pedagogical tool because they were accessible and public signs of common emotions, experiences and histories. The extraordinary skill of the artists was to communicate a set of historical experiences that were widely and viscerally felt but rarely named and still less understood. It is important to stress there this was a profoundly historical form of artistic practice in which the past, as documents, images and testimony was interrogated in order to understand the present and to allow black subjects to become visible in History. It is a practice that Gen Doy captured when writing about archival collections of ethnographic images that are 'bodies of evidence' and 'subjects in the archive' but also 'vital sources of knowledge which have the potential to be utilized in ways very different from some of those envisaged by those who assembled them.[61] Similarly, Eshun and Sagar's praise of BFAC practice, one they helped to rediscover and promote through the *Documenta 11* exhibition held in Germany in 2002, was precisely around its ability to connect document, testimony and archive.[62] Black art enabled viewers to reflect on the past and bring it into the present. It encouraged them to identify their individual experiences and emotions and to both personalise them, to invest them with personal meaning and make them theirs, and to collectivise them by sharing them, discussing them and making them foundational for a group of black citizens organising for social change.

Another reason for the importance of this art was simply the fact that it was becoming easier to reproduce. The pedagogical possibilities offered by the growing availability of historical images and by the ability to reproduce pieces of text and particular images should not be underestimated. It is entering the realm of speculation to

[58]Stephen Brooke, 'Space, Emotions and the Everyday: The Affective Ecology of 1980s London *'Twentieth Century British History*, Advance online publication 2016 doi:10.1093/tcbh/hww055
; Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth, *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange*, (London: Verso, 2003).
[59] David Harvey, 'The Right to the City', *New Left Review*, 53, (2008)https://newleftreview.org/II/53/david-harvey-the-right-to-the-city accessed June 2016.
[60] Stuart Hall, 'Black Diaspora Artists in Britain: Three "Moments" in Post-war History,' *History Workshop* 61, (2006)19.
[61] Gen Doy *Black Visual Culture*. (London: I. B. Tauris, 2000)120, 122, 127.
[62] Black Audio Film Collective *Documenta 11_ Platform 5: Exhibition* (Hatje Cantz,2002); Kodwo Eshun and Anjalika Sagar (eds.) *The Ghosts of Songs. The Film Art of the Black Audio Film Collective 1982-1998*. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007),12-15.

consider whether the increasing choice of historical signs and symbols, and the ability to use different media to edit, juxtapose and re-order, began to change the experience of historical time and the quality of historical consciousness. Yet it does seems likely that the linearity of historical time, and the modernist teleology of past into present, was further disrupted by the use of new technologies of display. Black visual art, uncovered buried pasts and brought distant memories to the present. Contained in these traces of the past were what Orlow calls the 'nowness of history' or 'the fact that history is a concern of the present rather an interest in the past'.[63] Art, in other words, was bound up with a 'presentist' regime of historical time in which societies became 'increasingly concerned with a search for roots, a longing for memory, the valorisation of testimonies and the cherishing of heritage.'[64] Black visual art did not exist in isolation but connected with other black cultural phenomena– the expressive practices of black British style and its associated dress aesthetic, and the background beat of reggae music as a soundtrack to identity – all were potential resources for imagining a new kind of place in a new kind of society[65] and the story presented here cannot be understood without connecting back to the broader cultural and political activism so perfectly captured in the recreation of the Huntley's bookshop in the *No Colour Bar* exhibition, a story that is also about creative writing, small publishing enterprises, poetry readings, and local history research.[66] It would also be wrong not to mention the other elements in a coalition of voices that came together in the 1980s to challenge the politics associated with the free-market liberalism of Thatcherism.[67]

In the 1980s new art and new technologies converged with attempts to establish a new multicultural society that recognised cultural pluralism and celebrated difference. In fact works of art, ranging from film to photography, from pastel drawings to music, and the ability to edit and reproduce them, were arguably key resources that encouraged individuals to ruminate on their place in society. Initially at least, this was an 'internal conversation', a form of self-talk in which a symbolic world of signs and symbols and languages was considered, and ultimately decisions taken about whether and how to respond to the daily realities of life in Britain.[68] Art was one of the mechanisms through which agents realised their shared struggles related to their place in history and it committed a generation of black people to public and collective strategies for change by protesting against racism, by establishing supplementary schools and by transmitting their ideas into wider social and political movements.[69] In the decades that followed the convergence between new art and new politics was not always comfortable.

---

[63] U. Orlow, 'Latent Archives, Roving Lens.' In E. Chambers, A. Malik, L. Reynolds, J. Connarty and J. Lanyon (eds.) *Ghosting. The Role of the Archive within Contemporary Artist Film and Video*. (Bristol: Picture This Moving Image, 1999) 35.

[64] Kaat Wils & Tom Verschaffel 'Longing for the present in the history of history education', *Paedagogica Historica*, 48, No 6 (2012), 793-799.

[65] Carol Tulloch, (ed.) *Black Style*. (London: V&A., 2004);W. 'Lez' Henry, Reggae, Rasta and the role of the deejay in the black British experience', *Contemporary British History*, 26, No3 (2012) 53-373.

[66] See Ian Grosvenor, 'From the 'eye of history' to 'a second gaze': the visual archive and the marginalised in history of education', *History of Education*, 36, No 4&5, (2007) 607-622; Grosvenor and Macnab, 'Photography'; Ian Grosvenor, and Kevin Myers, 'Birmingham Stories: local histories of migration, settlement and the practice of history', *Midlands History*, 36, No 2, (2011) 149-62; Ian Grosvenor and Kevin Myers,'Exploring supplementary education' *History of Education*, 40, No. 4, (2011)501-20; Kevin Myers, and Ian Grosvenor, 'Cultural learning and historical memory: a research agenda *Encounters/Encuentros/Rencontres on Education, 15,* (2014) 3-21; Kevin Myers, *Struggles for a Past. Irish and Afro-Caribbean Histories in England, 1951-2000.* (Manchester: MUP, 2015).

[67] See, Grosvenor and Macnab, 'Photography' and Myers, *Struggles*.

[68] Margaret Archer, *Structure, Agency and the Internal Conversation.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[69] Myers, *Struggles* .

The extent to which the history of black British art in 1980s in particular can be presented as one of historical transformation, of the emergence of a collective movement that heralded a cultural renaissance remains contested.[70] However, and as Chambers has forcibly argued, the 1990s saw 'subtle – and indeed, not so subtle – shifts in the politics of race and representation' which coupled alongside , institutional strategies for dealing with Black artists, 'the strident ascendancy of an art market that effectively assigned little or no value to the practice of most Black artists' and the perceived 'overly assertive or accusatory racial or social narratives ... [of] their practice' and the profile of many of the 1980s generation of Black artists fade into obscurity.[71] Sporadic historical and contemporary survey shows of Black artists continued, but they only reinforced their marginalisation and the isolation of their practice and images from the wider practice of artists.[72]There were rare exceptions, such as *Room at the Top*, London 1985, *Critical Realism: Britain in 1980s Through the Work of 28 Artists*, Nottingham and then touring, 1987, *Depicting History for Today* at the Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield in 1987 (and then at Leeds City Art Gallery and Rochdale Art Gallery) and the *Dislocations* at Kettle Yard, Cambridge in 1987-88, where Black artists exhibited alongside their white counterparts.[73] By the late 1980s Black art, as Rasheed Araeen, pointedly observed, became a term in the visual arts whose meaning became ever more generalised and was 'anything that cannot be attributed to white or European people,'[74]while Fisher argued that the impact of 1980s black visual art was limited because the art produced was lost inside identity politics.[75] Further, black artists and photographers were always 'Black' before they were an artist and, constrained by coded and pathologic thinking, 'the cumulative effect of this relentless quarantining was to reinforce the perception that Black artists' work was different, self-referencing, and ultimately marginal.'[76]

If black art was racialised – quarantined and undervalued because it was black – so too was the history that it had helped to identify, explore and bring to consciousness. The development of multicultural histories had carried radical potential but it too became located at the margins of historical practice. A multicultural narrative of Britain, erroneously to the arrival of the Windrush in 1948, was constructed in which there was a fleeting recognition of racism but then a concentration on resistance, contributions to the nation and ultimately settled integration. Matthew Mead has called this story the 'Windrush myth', historically inaccurate but inscribed on the national consciousness as a symbol of change.[77] Yet the symbol has left intact a dominant and racialised national narrative that has functioned to silence earlier and other migrations, to close down its connections to empire, to capitalism and global inequalities and to impose a highly circumscribed picture of black Britain.[78] As

[70] See Doy *Black Visual Culture*; David A. Bailey, Ian Baucom, Sonia Boyce, (eds) *Shades of Black. Assembling Black Arts in the1980s Britain.* (Durham: Duke University, 2005); Mercer, *Travel and See;* Chambers, *Things Done Change;* and Chambers, *Black Artists.*
[71] Chambers, *Things Done Change* xxiv-ix.
[72] Richard Hylton, *The Nature of the Beast*. (Bath: ICIA, 2007)12-13.
[73] Chambers, *Things Done Change,* 40, 87, 139-40.
[74] Rasheed Araeen, 'The Emergence of Black Consciousness in Contemporary Art in Britain: Seventeen Years of Neglected History.' In *The Essential Black Art*, (London: Chisendale Gallery, 1988) 7.
[75] Jean Fisher, 'The syncretic turn: cross-cultural practices in the age of multiculturalism. 'In Zoya Kocur and Simon Leung (eds.): *Theory in contemporary art since 1985*. (Malden (Mass.); Blackwell Publishing, 2005) 233–41.
[76] Chambers, *Things Done Change* 14.
[77] Matthew Mead, 'Empire Windrush: The cultural memory of an imaginary arrival', *Journal of Postcolonial Writing,* 45, No 2 (2009) 137-149. .
[78] Myers, *Struggles* ; Satnam Virdee 'Challenging the empire', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 37:10, (2014) 1823-1829;Rob Waters,' Thinking Black: Peter Fryer's *Staying Power* and the Politics of Writing Black British History in the 1980s,' *History Workshop Journal* 82, No1, (2016) 104-120.

Tony Kushner has argued, 'in confronting racism and explaining the complexity of what it is to be a migrant or a minority, past and present, there is still much soul-searching memory work to be done'.[79] Black artists in the 1970s and 1980s took control of the technologies of representation and produced images of the body which were 'born in *desire*: a desire for the plenitude of blackness, the desire to "come home" as the peoples and the lives they represent, have come home to themselves.' [80]The interconnection between blackness and Britishness which Hall alludes to was not 'a minority issue', but rather 'an urgent goal for us all, an essential element in the development of sense of nationality free of racial division.'[81] Looking back at what has happened in the intervening decades it is salutary to return to the 'Boy with the flag' and the thoughts of the boy, Winford Fagan, now a man, reflecting in 2015:

> When I look at this picture, it reminds me of how happy I was as a child. I think it has become so memorable because of the flag: we were black British, and to see a black person with the flag in that way is surprising. I have mixed feelings about it – I don't think you'd see a young lad doing that today. They'd rather carry the flag of their parents' nation, or a favourite rapper or something. I didn't know any better. We just accept where we are as home.[82]



[79] Tony Kushner, 'Alienated memories: Migrants and the silences of the archive' in Joan Tumblety (ed) *Memory and History: Understanding Memory as Source and Subject* (London: Routledge, 2013) 190.
[80] Hall, 'Vanley Burke,' 15. See also, Stuart Hall, 'Reconstruction Work.' In "The Critical Decade, Black British Photography in the 80s." *Ten-8*, Spring (1992) 106–13.
[81] Paul Gilroy, *Picturing Blackness in British Art: 1770s-1990s*. (London: Tate Gallery, 1995) n.p.
[82] Winford Fagan 'That's me in the picture', *The Guardian Weekend*, 12 September, 2015, 90.

Appendix: Black Visual Arts Exhibitions in the 1980s

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1980 | Five Black Photographers | Jamaican High Commission, London | |
| | IAUK Indian Artists Living in the UK | Burgh House Museum, London | |
| 1981 | Take Four | Midlands Art Centre, Birmingham | Vanley Burke |
| | Black art an' done | Wolverhampton Art Gallery | Keith Piper |
| 1982 | Closing the Gap | University of Aston, Birmingham | |
| | Metropolis | Royal Festival Hall, London | |
| | The Living Arts | Serpentine Gallery , London | |
| | The Pan-Afrikan Connection | King Street Gallery, Bristol | Keith Piper |
| | The Pan-Afrikan Connection | Ikon Gallery, Birmingham | Keith Piper |
| | The Pan-Afrikan Connection | Africa Centre, London | Keith Piper |
| | The Pan-Afrikan Connection | Trent Polytechnic | Keith Piper |
| 1983 | Black Women Time Now | Battersea Arts Centre , London | Sonia Boyce<br>Ingrid Pollard |
| | The Pan-Afrikan Connection | Midland Group, Nottingham | Keith Piper |
| | The Pan-Afrikan Connection | Herbert Art Gallery, Coventry | Keith Piper |
| | Beyond the Pan-Afrikan Connection | Midlands Art Centre, Birmingham | Keith Piper |
| | The Pan-Afrikan Connection | Africa Centre | Keith Piper |
| | Creation for Liberation Open Contemporary Black Art in Britain | St Matthews Meeting Place, London | |
| | Five Black Women Artists | Africa Centre, London | Sonia Boyce |
| | Heart in Exile | Black Art Gallery, London | Vanley Burke<br>Keith Piper |
| | New Contemporaries | ICA, London | |
| | The Black Triangle | The Photographers Gallery, London | |
| 1984 | Radical Black Art by the BLK Art Group (the Pan-Afrikan Connection) | Battersea Arts Centre , London | Keith Piper |
| | Radical Black Art by the BLK Art Group | Winterbourne House, University of Birmingham | Keith Piper |
| | Celebration of Black Women | Southall, London | Ingrid Pollard |
| | Heroes and Heroines | Black Art Gallery, London | Sonia Boyce |
| | Into the Open | Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield | Sonia Boyce |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Keith Piper |
| | Positive Images | The Peoples Gallery, London | Ingrid Pollard |
| | 2nd Creation for Liberation Open Contemporary Black Art in Britain | Brixton Art Gallery, London | |
| | The Selectors' Show, Camerawork | | |
| | TAKE 5 | Huddersfield Centre | Vanley Burke |
| 1985 | Black Women's Creativity Project | Camden, London | |
| | The Thin Black Line | ICA London | Sonia Boyce<br>Ingrid Pollard |
| | Black Artists from Azania | Upper Street Gallery, London | Keith Piper |
| | Black Skin/Blue Coat | Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool | Sonia Boyce<br>Keith Piper |
| | Black Women's Creativity Project | Camden, London and touring | Ingrid Pollard |
| | Carnival Through My Eye | The Peoples Gallery, London | |
| | Combinations | Cotton Gallery, Midland Arts Centre, Birmingham | |
| | 3rd Creation for Liberation Open Contemporary Black Art in Britain | Brixton Recreation Centre, London | |
| | Eastern Views | Museums and Art Galleries, Leicester | |
| | From Generation to Generation | OBAALA Arts Cooperative, Midland Art Centre, Birmingham | Sonia Boyce<br>Keith Piper |
| | From Generation to Generation | Black Art Gallery, London | Sonia Boyce<br>Keith Piper |
| | GLC Anti-Racist Mural Project | London | |
| | Hounslow Asian Visual Artists Collective | Hounslow Civic Centre | |
| | Human Interest | Cornerhouse, Manchester | Vanley Burke |
| | Mirror Reflecting Darkly | Brixton Art Gallery, London | |
| | New Horizons | GLC Royal Festival Hall, London | |
| | No Barriers | Cave Arts Centre, Birmingham | |
| | No Comment | Brixton Art Gallery, London | |
| | No More Little White Lies | Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff | Sonia Boyce<br>Keith Piper |
| | Road Works | Brixton Art Gallery, London | |
| | Room at Top | Nicola Jacobs Gallery, London | Sonia Boyce |
| | Three Asian Artists | Commonwealth Institute, London | |
| 1986 | Reflections of the Black Experience | Brixton Art Gallery, London | Vanley Burke<br>Ingrid Pollard |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Aurat Shakti: A Photographic Reflection of Our lives | Cockpit Gallery, London | |
| | Black Edge: Afro-Caribbean Photography in Britain | Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield | Vanley Burke |
| | Black Women in View | Battersea Arts Centre , London | |
| | Breaking the Seal | Herbert Museum and Art Gallery | Vanley Burke |
| | Brushes with the West | Wapping Sports Centre, London | |
| | Caribbean Expressions in Britain | Museum and Art Gallery, Leicester | Sonia Boyce |
| | Conceptual Clothing | Ikon Gallery, Birmingham | |
| | Darshan: An Exhibition by Ten Asian Photographers | Camerawork, London | |
| | Double Vision: An Exhibition of Contemporary Afro-Caribbean Art | Cartwright Hall, Bradford | Keith Piper |
| | From Resistance to Rebellion | Cockpit Gallery, London; Triangle Gallery, Birmingham | |
| | From Two Worlds | Whitechapel Art Gallery, London | Black Audio Film Collective Sonia Boyce Keith Piper |
| | From Two Worlds | Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh | Black Audio Film Collective Sonia Boyce Keith Piper |
| | Jagrati | Greenwich Citizens Gallery, London | |
| | Masquerading: The Art of Notting Hill Carnival | Graves Art Gallery, Sheffield | |
| | Some of Us Are Brave ... All of Us are Strong | Black-Art Gallery , London | Sonia Boyce |
| | South of the River | South London Art Gallery, London | |
| | Starring ... Mummy and Daddy : Photographs of Our Parents | OBAALA Black-Art Gallery, London | Ingrid Pollard |
| | Tangled Roots | Brixton Art Gallery, London | |
| | Testimony | The Pavilion, Leeds | Ingrid Pollard |
| | The Colours of Black: A Black Arts Showcase | GLC Conference Hall, London | |
| | Third World Within: Cross Section of Work by Afro-Asian Artists in Britain | Brixton Art Gallery, London | Keith Piper |
| | Twelve Days at the Roundhouse | The Roundhouse, London | |

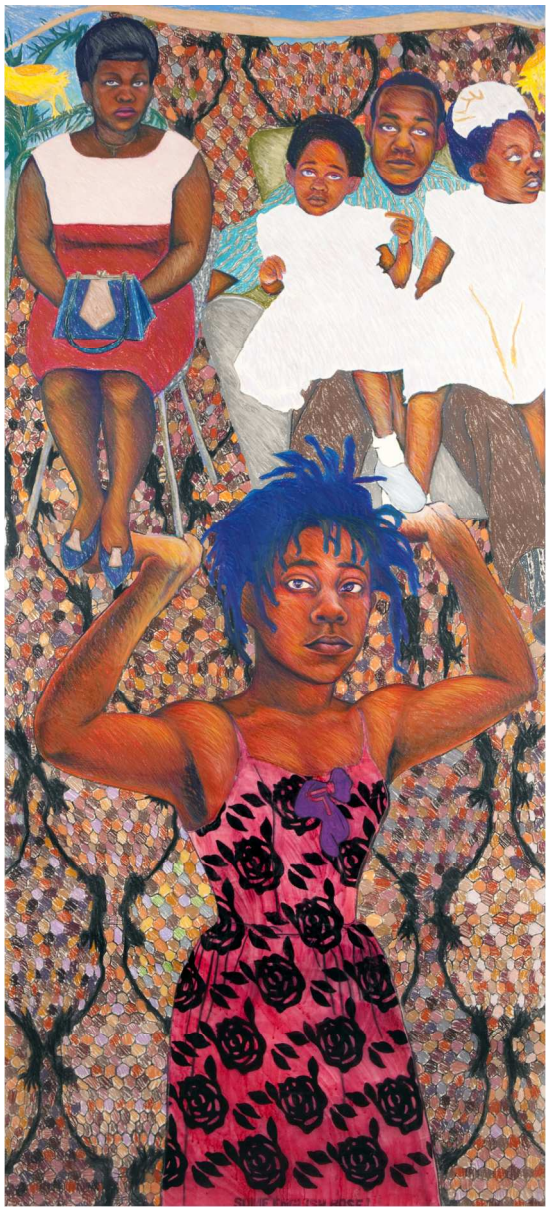
| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Unrecorded Truths | The Elbow Room, London | Sonia Boyce<br>Keith Piper |
| 1987 | Adventures Close to Home | Pentonville Gallery, London | Keith Piper |
| | Art History | Hayward Gallery, London | Keith Piper |
| | 4th Creation for Liberation Open Contemporary Black Art in Britain | Brixton Village, London | |
| | Critical Realism: Britain the 1980s | Nottingham Castle Museum | Sonia Boyce |
| | D-Max Photographic Exhibition | Ikon Gallery, Birmingham | Ingrid Pollard |
| | Depicting History for Today | Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield | Keith Piper |
| | Element Within: Asian Artists Group 1983-87 | Bonington Gallery, Nottingham | |
| | The Image Employed: the Use of Narrative in Black Art | Cornerhouse, Manchester | Sonia Boyce<br>Keith Piper |
| | New Robes for MaShulan | Rochdale Art Gallery, Rochdale | |
| | OBAALA's Marcus Garvey Centenary Show | Black-Art Gallery, London | Keith Piper |
| | Piper and Rodney | Prema Arts Centre, Uley | Keith Piper |
| | Polareyes: Black Women Photographers | Camden Arts Centre, London | Ingrid Pollard |
| | Sight Seers: Visions of Afrika and the Diaspora | Black-Art Gallery, London | |
| | State of the Art: Ideas and Images in the 1980s | ICA, London | Sonia Boyce |
| | State of the Nation | Herbert Art Gallery, Coventry | Keith Piper |
| | Testimony: three Black Women Photographers | Camerawork, London | Ingrid Pollard |
| | The Devil's Feast | Chelsea Art College, London | Keith Piper |
| 1988 | Along the Lines of Resistance | Cooper Gallery, Barnsley | Sonia Boyce |
| | An Element of Fantasy | Black-Art Gallery, London | |
| | Black Art: Plotting the Course | Oldham Art Gallery , Oldham | |
| | Contemporary Art by Caribbean Artists | 198 Gallery, London | |
| | The Essential Black Art | Chisenhale Gallery, London | Sonia Boyce<br>Keith Piper |
| | Figuring out the Eighties | Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle | |
| | Gold Blooded Warrior | Tom Allen Centre, London | |
| | Graven Images: Art, Religion and Politics | Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston | |
| | Incantations: Reclaiming Imaginations | Black-Art Gallery, London | |
| | Influences | South London Art Gallery, London | Keith Piper |
| | Mysteries | Black-Art Gallery, London | |
| | Numaish Lalit Kala | Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool | |
| | Once Upon a Time: Black Women Artists | Rochdale Art Gallery, Rochdale | |
| | Revelations of Black | Greenwich Citizens Gallery, | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | London | |
| | Spectrum Women's Festival Open Exhibition | South London Art Gallery, London | |
| 1989 | Being Here 1, 2 &3 | The Holden Gallery, Manchester | |
| | Black Art: New Directions | Stoke on Trent Museum and Art Gallery | |
| | Fabled Territories: New Asian Photography | City Art Gallery, Leeds | |
| | Intimate Distance | Photographers Gallery , London | Ingrid Pollard |
| | One Spirit: Black Artists Against Racism | 198 Gallery, London | |
| | Passion: Blackwomen's Creativity of the African Diaspora | The Elbow Room, London | Ingrid Pollard |
| | The Artist Abroad | Usher Gallery, Lincoln | |
| | The Cost of the English Landscape | Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle | Ingrid Pollard |
| | The Other Story: Afro-Asian Artists in Post War Britain | Hayward Gallery, London | Sonia Boyce Keith Piper |
| | US/UK Photography Exchange | Camerawork. London | |

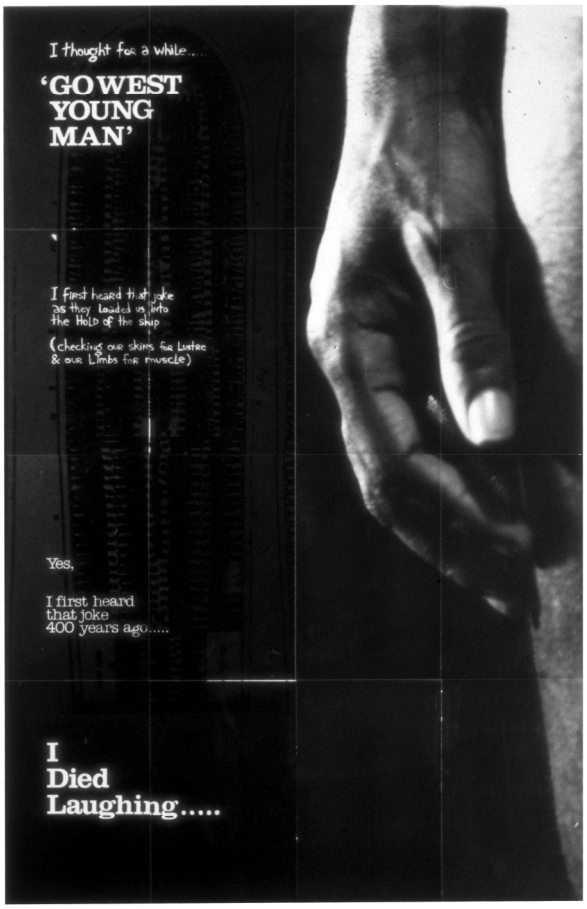
Note: (i) The list does not include solo exhibitions and (ii) it is not definitive which is indicative of the status of Black Visual Art in the story of post 1945 British Art .


375x194mm (300 x 300 DPI)

361x546mm (300 x 300 DPI)



105x233mm (300 x 300 DPI)




699x1000mm (72 x 72 DPI)

159x104mm (96 x 96 DPI)

Captions

Fig 1 *UK School Report* © Tam Joseph. Museums Sheffield.

Fig 2 *The Boy with the Flag* ©Vanley Burke. Birmingham City Archives

Fig 3 *She ain't holding them up, She's holding on (Some English Rose)* ©Sonia Boyce. Middlesborough Institute of Modern Art

Fig 4 *Go West Young Man* ©Keith Piper

Fig 5 Screen shot from *Handsworth Songs*